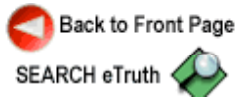




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SEARCH eTruth



Fun and learning

Technology course has swayed students

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DUNLAP -- When students enter one of Mike DuBois' technology classes at Concord High School, they might not be thinking of engineering as a career option.

But once they participate in the activities DuBois has set up for them, many change their mind.

Take Kevin Prah, a Concord senior who was interested in architecture before taking a technology class.

Kevin took all of DuBois' classes, and he is now considering Purdue University to work on a bachelor's degree in engineering.



Winding up: Concord High School technologies teacher Mike DuBois holds on as he helps technologies student Roberto Barajas wind the rubber band on his airplane.

"I've always wanted to know how things work, and we learn a lot about that," said Kevin. "But we all have a lot of fun."

Kevin was referring to the many competitions DuBois

holds in his class, making sure his students are learning but are also relaxed and smiling all the time. After the strenuous task of building robots from scratch, kids get to enjoy sumo robot contests, robot soccer and a mini tractor pull.

"In technology education, we integrate a little bit of everything, math, physics, computers," said DuBois. "And I have fun projects so kids get more excited about this."

Not only do the students get to compete with their robots and show off their fighting gadgets, but the winner's name ends up on DuBois' famous Hall of Fame. Some record holders stay at the top of the list for years.

"There are many kids who have come back and asked if they are still up there," said DuBois.

This year two of DuBois' students broke the record, after they designed, built and flew their own airplanes, taking off two veteran names from the list. The top student kept his gliders in the air for 62.78 seconds.

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DuBois said he might be adding a new class to the curriculum soon, to get more students interested in engineering. The new project, a robotics class, would make Concord an unique high school in the county.

The course would focus on building autonomous robots, with built-in sensors that move around freely, without a remote control. A difficult task, DuBois said it will be just as fun as their previous projects.

"Learning theory is not enough; practice is key and doing it can be fun," said DuBois.

It will take approximately two years to apply for a new class in the technology department, but DuBois thinks the idea will be received well by school officials.

"It's unique," he added. "And there is a big push for good engineers out there."

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